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A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND DEATH

OF

NATHANAEL OTHEN,

WHO WAS SHOT IN DOVER-CASTLE,

Oct. 26, 1757.

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1. I WAS born at Ogham in Hampshire, of honest parents, and when about thirteen years old, went to service to a farmer near Ogham, whom I served faithfully for a year. I was then for a year and a half postillion to the Exeter stage-coach. Afterwards I went up to London, and hired myself again, in the place of a postillion. It was here I was soon led into drunkenness, and by that means not long after into lewdness. Leaving this place after six months, I hired myself for another year as postillion, at the White-Horse in Piccadilly. Here I got more money, but could keep none, squandering it all away in drink and debauchery. My mistress reproving me for this, I was so enraged, that I went and entered on board a privateer. I went down as far as Exeter, in my way to Plymouth, in order to embark. But my mind then changed: so I came back to London, and hired myself in the Hay-Market as a second coachman. I soon quitted this place, and served Lord H—— in the same post for a year and a half, who when he wanted me no longer, recommended me to Col. B——, with whom I had large wages. But I wasted all among lewd women, 'till I embarked with my master for Holland.

2. In eight days we arrived at Williamstadt. Thence we went to Breda, where I was again drawn into drunkenness: My master hearing of it, desired the groom to reprove me, which made me reflect on my past life.

I went out into the fields, and went to prayer, repeating the prayers which I had been taught by my parents. And this I did many times while we stayed at Breda: And I had more power over sin than formerly.

3. We now removed to Maestricht. Soon after my master parted with the horses I took care of, and recommended me to another master. But I stayed with him only a fortnight, before I relapsed into drunkenness, and was persuaded to enlist among the Welch Fusileers, in the year 1747. I remained at camp till Michaelmas: thence we marched to Rudenburgh, where I remained all the winter. On the first day of March, 1748, we marched to Ruremond, where we encamped, tho' the weather was cold and the snow deep. After the cessation of arms, we removed from place to place, till in November we came to Williamstadt.

4. Here we lay five weeks on board the Sea-flower, a ship belonging to Whitby. On December 18, new stile, we set sail for Burnt-island: our ship having 41 horses on board. About sun-rise, just as we got over the bar, it looking as if we should have hard weather, the man of war that sailed with us prepared for it, backing his sails, and making fast his guns. Before we lost sight of land, we saw one of the transports break her yard. Soon after we came up along side of a man of war, who advised us, to take in some of our sails. But our captain, being head strong, did not regard him, but kept all his sails set, except the main-top-gallant. About two hours before sun-set, it blew a hurricane; and we having but few sailors, before they were able to furl the sails, the wind tore them all in pieces. And it was well it did. For we lay gunnel to; so that had the sails stood, we must have overfet. Suddenly a great outcry was made below, that the horses were broke loose. I ran down and found seven of them had broke loose, which made the rest so wild, that we were obliged to kill them all but one. But it was six days before we could get them overboard: during which the smell was so offensive, that it made the whole ship's crew sick. Two days after we saw the shore; but we could not possibly make it, the wind was so high. We then endeavoured to make Aberdeen: but were beat to sea again. The next morning we lost sight of land, the
weather

weather continued as before for five days. The sixth, at day-break, we were surprised to see in the midst of the sea a rock very high out of the water, and the ship was almost upon it: so all hands were called. The captain standing on the deck, cried, "O my ship, my ship!" Some of the soldiers cursed him for disheartening them, he answered, "You need not swear and curse, for you may look over the side of the ship, and see your graves." Many were then frightened, and some went to prayer. When we got to the lee-side of the rock, we strove to anchor; but the wind blew so hard, and the sea was so rough, we could not. The ship was now taking in water apace, so that we had two foot water in our hold already. Ten soldiers were employed, of whom I was one, to bale the water out with their camp-kettles. In a little while our steward perished with cold, as did the carpenter soon after. And several of the boys had their limbs frozen, so that they were unable to work. Eight soldiers who had been on board a man of war were ordered to supply their place.

5. The wind continued to blow hard at south, which drove us on the coast of Greenland. We were now so far north that I believe we had not above four hours day-light. The captain now came into the cabin, and cried, "Lord, have mercy upon us! What shall we do? I am afraid we shall be drove so far north, as to have "no day-light at all." Quickly after, he went out of his senses, and was confined in his cabin. But just then the wind shifted from south to north; and Lieutenant Eyres, understanding the theory of navigation, undertook the management of the ship. The 10th of March we came in sight of a rocky coast, but knew not what land it was. We tried to take soundings; but could find no bottom. A strong current ran between the rocks, which was against us: but the wind blew strong for us. We hung out a flag of distress at our main-top-mast, and fired several guns and several platoons.

6. During this distress most in the ship called upon God, and if any man spoke profanely, he was reprov-
ed for it. At the same time, a thought came into the minds of many, that there was some grievous sinner in the ship: and all agreed to cast lots, that they might find the man, for whose sake this was come upon us.

But they did not execute what they had agreed. Here we remained five days. One who had been a sailor, then swore, that it was the Orkneys we saw, and undertook to bring us safe in. But we had not gone far, before our passage was quite shut up, and we were just upon the rocks. In the morning a man was sent to the main top-mast head, and ordered to keep a good lookout. Before twelve he cried, "A boat a-head." Our boat was quickly manned in order to row to them. In a short time they came on board: they brought us into the harbour about sun-set. Here we remained, till we had liberty from the king of Denmark, to come to North-Bergen in Norway. When we came thither, several lost the use of their limbs, and many died in an hospital erected for us. Here we continued a month. Having then repaired our ship, and got a new captain, (for the old one was still disordered) we set sail for Scotland, intending for Burnt-island, which we hoped to reach in a short time.

7. But we had scarce lost sight of land two hours, when another violent storm arose. I then renewed the good resolutions I made in the last, and which I forgot almost as soon as I had made them. It blew exceeding hard; however on April 9, we came with great difficulty to Leith. When we were safe on shore, instead of returning God thanks, I soon fell to my old trade of drunkenness: and during our several removes, I continually plunged deeper and deeper into all manner of wickedness.

8. After being at several other places we marched to Glasgow, where I met with a sober woman, and one who feared God, whom I married and lived comfortably with, till orders came for my remove to England. We past the winter at Dover, where the advice of my wife made such an impression upon me, that I began to take up, and be a good husband, and worked hard to maintain myself and her. So I continued to do at Exeter, where I had a son born, and stayed eleven months. Thence we marched to Plymouth, where we embarked for Minorca. We landed there May 25, and I lived happy with my wife for two months. Then both she and my child were taken sick and died. This was a loss in-

deed ! I believe if she had lived, it would have been the saving of my life.

9. After her death I soon fell back to drunkenness, and to supply the expence of it, took to coining. The next spring, April 20, the French invested the castle of St Philip. Toward the end of the siege, my companion and I got drunk together and quarrelled : upon which he threatened to inform against me, for which a great reward was offered. Being soon after told that he was gone to give information, I thought there was but one way to save my life. So I and he who told me determined to desert together. In getting out of the castle, I fell into the sea, and was very near being drowned. With much difficulty we then got to an old house, and took shelter therein. But we were between the fire of the French and the English ; so we stayed not above a quarter of an hour. I would now fain have returned ; but our case was desperate : so we went on hand in hand. As we advanced, the French gave the signal, which was three flaps with their hand on the cartouch-box. As we did not answer it, or speak, (for neither of us could speak French) they immediately fired upon us. But here also the hand of God was over us. The shot all flew over our heads. They then came and took us to the commanding officer, who sent us to the town as prisoners. In the morning we were removed to a prison near one of the general's quarters, who sent for us about noon, and asked, what our design was ? I answered, it was our desire to go into France and work. He said, "this could not be allowed by any means, unless I first served in the army for three years." I said, I would only comply on condition I should not serve on the island : he replied, if I would not serve on the island, I must go back to prison. I was going, but he called me back and asked, "in what regiment in France would you like to serve ?" I answered in Fitz-James's. He said, I should. However for the present, I was remanded to prison. Two days after I was carried before the Duke de Richlieu, who asked me many questions. But I continued a prisoner during the whole siege, and was so, till we came to Valenciennes.

10. Here I was enlisted into Fitz-James's horse, and continued two months; but with an aking heart. I longed to be in England again, and only waited for an opportunity. This was suspected: so that when we marched thence, I was confined every night, till we got a great way into France. By interceding with the quarter-master, I then got my liberty. After many removes we marched to Hanau, and from thence about thirty leagues towards Muscovy. Here four of us agreed to desert the next night, and make the best of our way to the Duke of Cumberland's army. At eleven we set out in thunder, lightning and rain. We took each of us a brace of pistols, with our swords, and plenty of powder and ball. With great difficulty we past the guards, and then not knowing the roads, quickly lost our way: so that at break of day, we had got but nine miles. However we were now got into the right road: but day light approaching, we went into a wood, and stayed there till six in the evening: having been all this time without victuals, we were weak and faint; however we walked all night. In the morning we learned from a waggoner, that a party of French horse were within a mile and a half of us. We asked what he thought they came there for? He said he knew not unless it was to look for deserters. Upon this, finding no way to get to the Duke, we agreed to make for Holland, having changed our clothes with some of the boors, who likewise behaved kindly to us, or we must have perished.

11. Having sold our arms to buy us provisions, after many difficulties and dangers, in passing by both the French and Imperial troops, we at length came to Maeftricht. Thence we went to Middleburgh, and afterward to Flushing, where we got on board an English man of war, which the next morning sailed, and brought us into the Downs. The third day after we landed, we were apprehended as deserters, and laid in irons for six days. We were then removed to Brumpton camp, near Chatham, where I was tried by a court martial, for deserting from the castle of St. Philip's, which I acknowledged and was condemned to die.

12. I now began to be in great trouble, not knowing what to do. At length my companion and I determined

mined to lay violent hands on ourselves. In this resolution I continued till night. Then I began to think of the consequences of self-murder. Betimes in the morning I went to prayer, and continued prayer 'till about ten o'clock. In my distress I bethought me of one James Harbuckle, a drummer in our regiment. When he came I told him of my condition, and he began to talk to me of the love of Christ to sinners: of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. In the evening he was obliged to go; but he promised to send some of his brethren to me. Two of them came at night and explained more at large what James Harbuckle had said. From this time I found another kind of trouble: my sins were so set in array against me, that not an evil work, or word, or thought, I had ever given way to, but was brought to my remembrance. Yet I was not so much troubled for fear of hell, as for grief that I had offended so good a God, and had crucified the Son of God afresh. For three days and three nights my distress was so great, that it was as if all my flesh was tearing off my bones, and my bones breaking in pieces, which made me often look at my hands and legs, to see if it was not so.

13. My load so increased, that I was just ready to despair of mercy, when on a sudden it all dropt off. I was on my knees at prayer, when in a moment all my fear was gone. I knew I had redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of my sins, and the love of God was shed abroad in my heart, enabling me to love all mankind, even my enemies; and him in particular who had been the cause of my deserting. And I had an earnest desire to see and tell him so. And I found every day an increase in love, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I was so delivered from the fear of death, that I could have rejoiced to have died that instant: being filled with prayer and praise, and thanksgiving, such as no tongue can express. And this sense of the love of God to my soul, I never since lost, not for a moment.

14. I was removed from thence to Dover-Castle, where I sent for Mr. Edwards, the minister of St. Mary's. He came the next morning, and afterwards attended me very diligently. I desire to thank God for
his

his help, and hope the Lord will bless him for his kindness to me. But I could not be satisfied, till I had sent into the town to enquire, if there were any of the people called METHODISTS there? They sent word, they would come when their day's work was done: but it being then late, they could not be admitted. On Sunday they came again, and we prayed and sang, and rejoiced together in the salvation of God. I desired they would come again if I was spared, which they did the following Sunday, when my spirit was so revived, that I could not help declaring to my fellow-soldiers what God had done for my soul. And now my prison was turned into a church, an house of prayer and praise. People crowded in, soldiers and others, to whom Mr. W——r gave an exhortation. When he had done, I stood up, and begged my fellow-soldiers, to cry to God for mercy, and grace to forsake all their sins, lest the day of grace should be past, and they be given over to a reprobate mind.

15. I spent the remaining part of the day in giving a relation of my life, to one who wrote it down from my mouth; but I could not finish it then. Monday, Oct. 23, Mr. Edwards administered the Lord's supper to me. In the afternoon Mr. W——r gave another exhortation, as I did likewise when he had done, and we sang praises to God with a good courage, and poured out our souls in prayer. The soldier who had threatened to inform against me at St. Philip's now came in. Formerly I was resolved to kill him, wherever I met him: but I now felt nothing but love and pity. So I earnestly exhorted him to forsake his sins, and seek mercy while it might be found."

16. What follows is added by him who wrote the foregoing relation. "We now parted, after I had promised to be with him, during the short remainder of his life, as much as my business would permit. Tuesday the 25th, Mr. Edwards administered the Sacrament to him, and examined him closely as to the state of his soul. He readily answered every question, and declared his desire to depart and to be with Christ. About ten at night I came to him again, and found him employed in exhorting his fellow soldiers, and in praise and prayer. In the same employment he had been the greatest part of the day. In the same he continued till about twelve:

when his strength being quite exhausted, he was forced to take some rest. He would fain have slept in his coffin; but we persuaded him to lie on the straw. When he waked, he asked, what o'clock it was? And being answered "about three," he complained that he had slept too long; but found himself much refreshed. After Mr. W——r had read and expounded a chapter, and spent some time in prayer and praise, he again exhorted his fellow soldiers, to forsake their sins, particularly those to which he knew they were addicted.

17. The morning now advancing, he expressed much longing for the happy hour, when he was to "put on, as he called it, his wedding dress," and to be with the Lord. We then left him awhile, and when we returned, found him dressed in white, standing on a long form, and exhorting all the people. We all joined in prayer, after which he broke out in praise to God his Saviour. Mr. Edward's coming in, asked, how he did? He answered, "Blessed be God, never happier." After a few more questions the minister withdrew, and OTHER getting on the form again, exhorted all who were present with such joy and fervency of spirit, as testified a hope full of immortality.

18. He was thus employed, when the officer came, to tell him, the time was come; he then cheerfully stepped off the bench, and without any delay went forwards, and said, "I had a good wife, and I loved her well: but I now go forth with greater pleasure to die, than I did on my wedding day to be married." When he was out of prison and delivered to the soldiers who were to guard him to the place of execution, he began singing that hymn with a loud voice,

"Behold the Saviour of mankind,

"Nail'd to the shameful tree!"

Walking on he took notice of a company of young soldiers, to whom he earnestly said "take warning by me, I am young; but 27 years of age, in full health and strength. And yet I shall soon be as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up. My morning sun goes down at ten o'clock. Yet I have found mercy: and so may you. O that you saw the danger of being out of Christ! If you felt this in the manner I felt it, especially for three days and three nights, it would make the stoutest of you tremble."

19. Then turning to me and some others, who walked near him, he said, "Come, which of you will help me to sing?" On which he gave out his favourite hymn (on the crucifixion) and we all sang it with him. When he came to the spot where he was to suffer, the minister was ready to pray with him, in which we all joined. Afterwards the officer gave him liberty to go round and exhort all the soldiers. He began at the right and ended at the left, sparing neither officers nor private men: tho' to some he spoke more particularly, and in a manner which I trust they will never forget. He then asked the serjeant if the major thought him too long. He said, no: upon which he gave out the lamentation of a sinner. While we were singing, the men were drawn out who were to shoot him, and stood a little behind him. He turned and looked upon them, and Mr. W. asked him, "whether he felt any fear of death?" He said, None at all blessed be God: I feel my faith stronger and stronger." Here we all took our last farewell of him, and parted with a kiss of love. He then cheerfully walked to the mark, kneeled down, and having commended his soul to God, gave the signal. In that instant his body pitched forward, and his soul sprang into eternity.

20. Some of our friends told the serjeant, that if it was agreeable to the major, Mr. W——r would preach a sermon on the occasion. The offer was readily accepted. So in the afternoon he stood near the place of execution, and all the soldiers were ordered out, and formed a ring round about him. The officers as well as soldiers were present, and behaved with the utmost seriousness.

As I was coming back, a soldier said to the people, "If I was as well prepared for death as OTHEN, I would not care if I was to be carried up the green, and shot this moment." Another said, "I was so prejudiced against him by reports, that I would have shot him as soon as I would a dog. And I waited at the prison door, expecting to see a monstrous creature, when I saw a man with grace shining in his face. And I hope what I then saw and heard will be a blessing to me as long as I live."

FINIS.

